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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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BALTIMORE COUNTY DRUG SMUGGLER SENTENCED

Baltimore, Maryland - Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today United States District Court Judge Benson Everett Legg sentenced Robert James Wallace, age 30, of White Marsh, Maryland to 21 years and 8 months of imprisonment followed by five years of supervised release for conspiring to distribute more than 50 kilograms of cocaine.

According to the statement of facts entered into evidence at his guilty plea on September 30, 2004, Wallace was responsible for organizing the smuggling of kilogram quantities of cocaine into Maryland from New York City from May 2002 to August 2003. The cocaine was usually transported to the White Marsh area of Baltimore County via motor vehicles equipped with hidden compartments. Once smuggled into Maryland, Wallace would oversee the distribution of the cocaine to other drug traffickers in the Baltimore metropolitan area, who, in turn, would resell it to other individuals.

Wallace was arrested on August 4, 2003 after police observed him meeting in the parking lot of the White Marsh Mall with individuals driving a minivan bearing New York license plates.

Inside an electronically activated secret compartment, law enforcement agents found \$10,000 and cocaine residue. Search warrants executed later that same day yielded three quarters of kilogram of cocaine and assorted drug paraphernalia.

At the sentencing hearing today, Judge Legg refused the defense's request that he exercise the discretion recently given to him and other all federal judges under the recent Supreme Court case of *United States v. Booker*, and sentence the defendant below the sentencing range calculated under the previously mandatory federal sentencing guidelines. Judge Legg gave Wallace a sentence within the guideline range noting that the distribution of more than 50 kilograms of cocaine "wreaked a tremendous amount of social havoc and human misery" on the people who live in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

The case was jointly investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Baltimore County Police Department, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Baltimore City Police Department, the Maryland State Police, the Harford County Sheriff's Department and the United States Attorney's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Charles Peters and Martin Clarke.